

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 12426 261446Z

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ACTION NEA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7557

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT SOCI IN

SUBJECT: COURT-MARTIAL OF US SIKH CONVERTS IN WEST GERMANY

1. THE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS OCTOBER 21-22 CARRIED VERY BRIEF REPORTS THAT US ARMY PFC'S JAMES K. BROADWELL AND RICHARD K. PRESCO, RECENT CONVERTS TO THE SIKH RELIGION, WERE TO BE COURT-MARTIALLED FOR THEIR REFUSAL TO REMOVE THEIR TURBANS AND SHAVE. ONE VERNACULAR PAPER, OSUMI DARD OF JULLUNDUR, PUNJAB, USED THESE STORIES AS A PEG ON WHICH TO HANG A MILD EDITORIAL ON THE PROBLEMS OF SIKHS ABROAD, REFERRING TO THE CONTROVERSY IN THE UK OVER WHETHER SIKH MOTORCYCLISTS MUST WEAR HELMETS.

2. TWO NEWSPAPERS APPEARING OCTOBER 26 (LOCAL HOLIDAY) RAN UPI REPORTS ON THE CONVICTION OF BROADWELL AND PRESCO BY A COURT-MARTIAL IN WURZBURG, WEST GERMANY. THEY REPORTEDLY FACE MAXIMUM PUNISHMENT OF SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT, LOSS OF TWO-THIRDS PAY, AND REDUCTION OF ONE RANK AS A RESULT OF CONVICTION FOR DISRESPECT TO A SUPERIOR OFFICER AND WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE OF A LAWFUL ORDER. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED ONE CABLE FROM THE "SIKH COMMUNITY" IN

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 12426 261446Z

LONDON EXPRESSING SHOCK AT THE "OUTRAGEOUS ACTION" AND INTER-

REFERENCE IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF REPRESENTED BY THE ORDER THAT THE
TWO SOLDIERS REMOVE THEIR TURBANS AND SHAVE.

3. SMALL DEMONSTRATIONS AT US OFFICES IN INDIA PROTESTING THE
BROADWELL-FRESCO CONVICTION WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING; THE BRITISH
HIGH COMMISSION HERE WAS THE SCENE OF MILD PROTESTS OVER THE
HELMET CONTROVERSY. PRESS INQUIRIES ARE PROBABLE. THE EMBASSY
WOULD APPRECIATE AN ACCURATE CABLE SUMMARY OF THE BROADWELL-
PRESKO INCIDENT AND PRESS GUIDANCE.
MOYNIHAN

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